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BY THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES,

FEBRUARY 14, 1856.

Read and 500 copies ordered to be printed.

By order,

THOS. H. KENT, of Jos., Clerk.

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

RELATIVE TO.

TO THE ABOLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR OF GUANO.

2000-2001: The first year of the new millennium, characterized by the start of the dot-com bubble and the beginning of the 9/11 attacks.

REPORT.

The Committee on Agriculture having been instructed to enquire into the expediency of abolishing the office of Inspector of Guano, and to examine the report and statement of the Inspector, beg leave to report that they have given the subject a full and thorough investigation and respectfully submit the following report:

They find from an examination of the history of the law regulating the inspection of Guano, that up to the last session of the Legislature in 1854, it had not afforded that protection to the consumers which their interests demanded. At that time, complaints from the farmers of the State had become very general, and in the Legislature, efforts were made to repeal the law or amend or alter it so as to accomplish the object for which it was designed. After much discussion, we find by the journal of the last session, that the present law was unanimously passed in both branches, prescribing the mode of inspection and requiring the Inspector to make a classification of the different varieties of Guano, and to adopt such marks as should indicate the quality of the Guano contained in the particular bag or barrel, bearing the mark. Tables of these were required to be published, as also the analysis of each cargo, with the name of the vessel in which it was imported, and heavy penalties were imposed upon persons who should counterfeit the marks of the Inspector, use packages previously used, having the Inspector's mark thereon, or who should sell Guano not bearing the Inspection mark. This law in all its details was intended to give that protection to the farmers of the State which their interests demanded.

When the amount of money expended by the farmers in the purchase of these expensive fertilizers is considered, and the labor required for their application to the land, and the fact that thousands of the tillers of the soil in many parts of our State,

owing to the exhausted condition of their land, are wholly dependent for remunerative crops upon the use of one or the other of the varieties of Guano, and when we consider also the fact that the value of Guano depends solely upon its chemical constituents, which hidden in their nature from common observation can only be determined by chemical analysis.

The expediency indeed, almost absolute necessity for a rigid inspection, such as is now required by law, becomes manifest and cannot be overlooked by those who in good faith protect and advance the farming interests of the State at large, and particularly those portions not favored with rich and productive lands.

The present law having been passed with so much unanimity and supposed to contain every provision necessary to accomplish the important objects for which it was intended, it was a matter of interest for us to enquire whether its provisions had been carried out, and if after an experience of nearly two years it has been approved by those directly interested in its operation.

Upon the passage of the law, the present incumbent was appointed to discharge the duties of the office, and, as required, prepared the following classification of all the varieties of Guano then in market, with the table containing the marks used to indicate the qualities of the Guano bearing them :

PERUVIAN GUANO.

All Guano marked "Peruvian," letter A, contains Ammonia and its elements equal to from 15 to 18 per cent.

All Guano marked "Peruvian," letter B, contains Ammonia and its elements equal to from $12\frac{1}{2}$ to 15 per cent.

All Guano marked "Peruvian," letter C, contains Ammonia and its elements equal to from 10 to $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

All Guano marked "Peruvian," letter D, contains Ammonia and its elements equal to from 7 to 10 per cent.

MEXICAN GUANO.

All Guano marked "Mexican," letter AA, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to over 55 per cent. of Bone Phosphate of Lime.

All Guano marked "Mexican," letter A, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to from 45 to 55 per cent.

All Guano marked "Mexican," letter B, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to from 35 to 45 per cent.

All Guano marked "Mexican," letter C, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to from 25 to 35 per cent.

WHITE MEXICAN GUANO.

All Guano marked "White Mexican," letter A, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to from 75 to 85 per cent. of Bone Phosphate of Lime.

All Guano marked "White Mexican," letter B, contains Phosphoric acid equal to from 65 to 75 per cent.

All Guano marked "White Mexican," letter C, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to from 55 to 65 per cent.

AFRICAN GUANO.

All Guano marked "African," letter A, will contain Ammonia and its elements equal to 2 per cent., and Phosphoric Acid equal to 35 per cent. and upwards, of Bone Phosphate of Lime.

COLUMBIAN GUANO.

All Guano marked "Columbian," letter A, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to from 80 to 90 per cent. of Bone Phosphate of Lime.

All Guano marked "Columbian," letter B, contains Phosphoric Acid equal to from 70 to 80 per cent. of Bone Phosphate of Lime.

These tables were published and printed in circular form for distribution throughout the State; an office was established in a central part of the city, for the convenience of the trade and consumers; and a book containing the certificate of the analysis of each cargo imported, is kept for the inspection and use of purchasers. The office having been thus organized and established, we find from the testimony of the principal importers in Baltimore city, that the classification and tables have been approved by them, and furnish the true standard for its commercial value; that the operation of the law has largely contributed to make that city the largest Guano market in the country, and that to change or abolish it will disturb a well settled system of inspection, impair public confidence, and prove injurious to the interests of both importers and consumers; and from many letters received from farmers in different parts of our own and adjoining States, it is apparent that the law and its operation is approved and considered the best and indeed the only protection they have from imposition and fraud in purchasing their supplies of this important commodity. We will add in justice to the present officer, that from the evidence we have received from both importers and consumers, they unite in testifying to the efficient and satisfactory manner in which he has discharged the duties of the office.

The system from all the testimony we have received, seems to be practical and beneficial to the interests involved, and we know of no changes that can be made, that will improve its efficiency. We therefore respectfully report and recommend that no change be made in the present law, but suggest that the month and year in which it is imported, should be marked by the Inspector, upon every package of Peruvian Guano, thus enabling the farmer to learn the age of the particular lot he is purchasing.

The report with the accompanying statement, submitted by the Inspector, has been carefully examined by us, and though the amount of expenditure appears large, we are satisfied from the vouchers and affidavits presented, that the various amounts charged, have been properly expended, in the discharge of the duties of the office as required by the law. A number of expenses having been incurred the first year in establishing the office, &c., which will not be required hereafter, it was a question with the committee, whether the price for inspection might not be reduced, and a sufficient amount received to defray the expenses of weighing &c., and leave a fair compensation for the officer; after mature consideration of this question, we have concluded that in view of the fact, that the amount of importations in each year are uncertain and variable, and that the importations this year, have fallen off over 20,000 tons, making a large diminution in the amount of receipts, that a reduction of the fee for inspection would tend to lessen, in some measure, the efficiency of the present system, by a curtailment of expenditure in the employment of less competent persons for weighing, marking and superintending the discharge of cargoes.

No corresponding advantage can be secured to the farmers by a reduction in the fee, as we are satisfied that the present price does not enhance the cost of the article but to a very trifling extent; the whole charge under the Maryland inspection for weighing inspection, marking &c., is but 30 cents, whilst in New York, Philadelphia, Alexandria and other cities the weighing alone costs much about the same, leaving the purchaser after all without any sufficient guarantee of the accuracy of that weighing, and virtually without any information as to the chemical constituents and of course of the real value of the article he is buying; a want of which knowledge may and does often occasion not only a total loss of the amount paid for the article he purchases, but also a loss of any adequate return for the year's labor and the use of the large capital employed necessarily by farmers, because of the failure of his crops. And further it is well known that since the reduction from 40 cents to 30 cents, by the last Legislature, the importer has ceased to add the inspection fee, or any part of it to the price of the article.

Previous to this reduction 20 cents was added to the price per

ton and the farmer was required to pay it, it being one half of the charge, the other half being paid by the importer, in view of the fact that the expense of weighing would be necessarily incurred whether the article is inspected or not.

In view of all the facts elicited by our investigation, we respectfully recommend that no charge be made in the present law, believing that the interests of all concerned are promoted thereby.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

JAS. L. DAVIS, Chairman,



